THE FIFTH DAY.

Saturday, the 26th February, 1927.

The Assembly met again at 11-30 A. M. on the 26th February, 1927.

70. Ayurveda Department.

MR. M. K. PADMANABHA KANIYAR (*Member, Nominated*) said that the Ayurveda was the cheapest, most ancient and most efficacious system of medicine. The Ayurveda Department in Travancore needed some slight reforms which, if carried out, would be most beneficial to the public. The reforms needed were in regard to grants-in-aid, appointments, inspection of *vaidyasalas* and distribution of medicine.

The Kaniyars were famous for their knowledge of medicine and astrology. There were many who possessed a scientific knowledge and long practical experience in the indigenous system of treatment. But most of them had no examination qualifications because, when they began the study of medicine, they were not sent to the Ayurveda College nor asked to sit for examinations. There were, however, approved and popular *vaidyans* among the Kaniyars, although they had no such qualifications. The member's first prayer was that those popular *vaidyans* should be encouraged by the award of grants-in-aid.

One officer was not sufficient to conduct the inspection of all *vaidyasalas* in the State and could not do full justice to his work. More Inspectors should therefore be appointed in view to increase the efficiency and usefulness of the *vaidyasalas*.

The grants awarded to the Ayurveda *vaidyans* varied from Rs. 15 to Rs. 30 per mensem. The amounts were too small. The Ayurveda *vaidyan* had to attend his *vaidyasala* morning and evening and had to depend on his grant and the little profits that he might earn otherwise for his livelihood. Living had become costly. Moreover, he had to equip his *vaidyasala* with all such medicines as might be required by the Inspector. The member therefore suggested that the grants should be raised and fixed at Rs. 25 to Rs. 50. The status of the *vaidyan* should be at least equal to that of a compounder in the Medical Department or of a Veterinary doctor in the Agricultural Department. The Ayurvedic system of treatment had become very popular and the number of people attending Ayurveda *vaidyasalas* was steadily increasing. There were many *vaidyasalas* maintained by *vaidyans* not in receipt of grants-in-aid, merely for the benefit of the poor people. In the circumstances, the Ayurvedic *vaidyans* deserved better encouragement at the hands of the Government.

The Kaniyars were not adequately represented in the Ayurveda Department. At least those among them who had examination qualifications should be appointed. Every year, the Government were opening 10 new *vaidyasalas*. That policy should be pursued till the total number of *vaidyasalas* in the State reached 150. Two of the 10 *vaidyans* appointed every year should be Kaniyars; and a Kaniyar alone should be appointed in the vacancy caused by the death of a Kaniyar *vaidyan*.

The Government had opened a pharmacy for the supply of medicines to the Ayurveda Hospital and to others. Its abolition, for some unknown reason, had put people to much hardship. Its revival would be beneficial to the *vaidyans* and the people in general.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Padmanabha Kaniyar, there is a fixed scale for increasing the number of *vaidyasalas*, and as at present advised, the Government cannot all on a sudden raise the number as you propose; nor is there at present sufficient justification for raising the grant-in-aid and fixing it at from Rs. 25 to Rs. 50.

You ask that two Kaniyars at least should be appointed as *vaidyans* every year and that every Kaniyar vacancy should be filled by a Kaniyar only. This is a matter in which Government cannot lay down any hard and fast rule. But you may rest assured that the claims of duly qualified Kaniyars will be considered whenever a vacancy has to be filled.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

The Pharmacy at the Central *Vaidyasala* has been for good and sufficient reasons abolished some time ago, and consequently, it will not be possible for the Government to supply medicines from the Central Hospital to the outlying dispensaries.

71. Medical Department.

MR. C. PERCY BHANU (*Member, Nominated*) said that it was highly gratifying to note that the Administrative Board, Medical Services, was discharging its functions satisfactorily. But there were one or two matters which required the special attention of the Board. The first was that hygiene and sanitation should be compulsorily taught in Vernacular Middle and High Schools for boys. Students passing out of Class VII were ignorant of the elementary rules of health and cleanliness. It was probably due to the absence of text-books in the vernaculars and also of proper teachers. The defects should be remedied by prescribing a minimum number of lectures on the subject every year and testing the knowledge of students in the matter by setting a few questions on the subject at the examinations. Similarly, lessons on infant welfare and maternity should be taught in Vernacular Middle and English High Schools for girls. The lessons could be taught either by means of lectures or by circulation of printed pamphlets.

Secondly, lectures on epidemic diseases, their causes and prevention, should be arranged to be delivered in rural parts. The diseases could be controlled in towns where there were Municipal Councils or hospitals easily accessible. The rural areas did not possess such advantages and therefore lectures would be most beneficial to them. The lectures should be delivered on festive occasions when people would be assembling in large numbers. Leaflets also should be freely circulated. It would be advisable if the Tahsildars could be asked to arrange such health propaganda.

An English Medical School in Travancore was a necessity. There was a Medical School in Trivandrum some years ago and persons trained there were employed in different places. In the absence of such a school, students were obliged to go abroad and they often found it difficult to get admission to the medical schools there. As regards the cost of running a medical school, the member said that fees adequate to cover the expenditure might be charged.

Many people in the rural parts of the State depended on Mission hospitals and private institutions for medical treatment, but those institutions received little or no encouragement. It was, therefore, necessary to give adequate grants-in-aid to efficient and deserving Mission and other private hospitals.

Quack doctors were on the increase in the State. Their treatment was more dangerous than the diseases themselves. They had no scientific knowledge but prescribed on the strength of advertisements published in medical catalogues. Some of those doctors even ventured to perform surgical operations resulting in danger to the patients. In view to remove the evil, medical practitioners should be tested and given licenses.

Tuberculosis was rapidly on the increase in the State. Consumptive patients were advised by doctors to go to Madanapalli for treatment, while in Travancore there were several places which could be rendered suitable for such treatment. The member therefore suggested the opening of a Tuberculosis Hospital in Travancore.

Leprosy was another common disease in Travancore. There were several lepers engaged in different professions and even employed in the Government service. To prevent contagion from them, a Leprosy Regulation should be passed.

Lastly, the member prayed for the establishment of one or two more hospitals for women.

DEWAN'S REPLY : Dr. Percy Bhanu, you have taken up a large number of subjects in your representation. First of all, you dealt with the teaching of hygiene in the Vernacular Middle and High Schools. Hygiene is already being taught, as you know, in elementary schools. Whether it should be taught in the Vernacular High Schools is a question which must wait until a settlement is arrived at on the subject of the amalgamation of the English Middle Schools and the Vernacular Middle Schools.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly